



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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THE "P.R." LETTER BAG.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of Correspondents.]

[We venture to publish the following letter, as it may be of use to members of the P.N.E.U. who have friends in India.—ED.]

DEAR MADAM,—Many thanks for your letter of May 15th. I have decided, as Miss Mason suggests, to begin with the P.N.E.U. Reading Course and am writing to Miss Armfield. I have already started as I have the books to go on with. Since writing to you, I have heard from Mrs. —, wife of the Bishop of —, that out of their five branches of the Mothers' Union, two are composed of Bengali ladies. When she gives them an address, a Bengali lady, who is very well educated and speaks good English, translates for her. Mrs. — takes in the *Parents' Review* as I do, and says several other members of the Mothers' Union there do the same. Of course there is more scope for this in Madras, where most of them speak English, and there is the wife of a Judge there, who is greatly interested in the higher education of Indian women and girls, and has great influence in their schools. She was given the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal last year for the work she has done in this way. I know she is a follower of Miss Mason's teaching, as she lent her book *Home Education* to a friend of mine there, to whom I had been talking of the book, and she has other books of Miss Mason's also. It was a curious coincidence that just after receiving your letter, I saw an advertisement in the Bombay paper, of the sale of Miss Mason's books by a Parsee bookseller well-known there. They were specially advertised as *Home Education* series; it is the first advertisement of them I have seen in this country. I also saw *Home Education* for sale in Madras. I am very glad to have the papers about the Mothers' Reading Course, and will keep them by me.

Yours very truly,

E. H.

Poona, India,
June 22nd 1905.

DEAR EDITOR,—As a member of the P.N.E.U., and a reader and admirer of your books, I venture to write to you. I have given some thought to the beginnings of the religious education of my children, recognising that while the great influence is the happy Christian atmosphere of the home, other aids must be called in. I have been shocked and distressed more than once lately to see the lax manner in which even children in Christian homes are often trained in these matters. Prayer, for instance. Lately, I was with a mother, who was putting her two little girls to bed. When they were in bed, she said, "Now, say your prayers." Lying on her back in careless attitude, with eyes wide open, the younger rattled off a very long hymn at break-neck speed, then came a long interlude of "Bless so-and-so." Then followed another hymn, then another series of "Help so-and-so," the whole concluded by yet another hymn. The elder girl followed suit in the same careless, irreverent style. The mother—a Christian woman—seemed quite satisfied. Another girl of nine, whom I knew, would jump into bed, cover her eyes a moment, and that was all. When I enquired what form of prayer she used, she said, "Gentle Jesus." It seemed to me terrible that in Christian homes they should be no better taught than this.

For my children I use at night the little prayer in Canton's "Invisible Playmate," and for their morning prayer I have written one in the same metre, of which I enclose a copy.

Dear God, I thank Thee for all good,
For home and love, for daily food,
For birds and beasts, for trees and flowers,
For sunshine and refreshing showers.

Help me, dear God, in work and play,
To be Thy loving child to-day;
To share with others and be kind,
Father's and Mother's word to mind;

And not forget poor girls and boys,
Hungry or sick, who have few joys.
I thank Thee too that Jesus came
To earth, and ask all in His name.

Amen.

I should be glad to know if you approve of it, in any measure, as you must have given much thought to these matters. To these the children generally add personal petitions, and in a little talk beforehand, I try to guide them in a natural way to give thanks, confess, and ask. I should be glad to know whether you think I am on the right lines. I may interpolate here that my little ones are quite babies, the eldest not yet four.

I am, very truly yours,

A. A.

[We believe that many mothers will be grateful for "A. A.'s" beautiful little prayer. We should be glad of further correspondence on this profoundly important subject.]

DEAR EDITOR,—In the programmes we are told to look in January in the *Parents' Review* for the list of music to be played to the children during the term, and I have looked and cannot find it. Would it be troubling you too much to ask if any special pieces have been chosen. Last term the Sandringham Organist used to come to my house to chat about the music with the children and play to them, and I cannot tell you how thoroughly they enjoyed these musical half-hours, and how much it helped us all. I want to go on with the same plan this term, if possible, and should like to begin as soon as I can. Possibly the list will come out in the *Parents' Review* in February, but if I could by some kind help from you have it earlier I should be most truly grateful. May I conclude, etc.,

Believe me, yours, etc.,

A. B.

January 6th, 1906.

[We venture to publish part of this letter, as it contains a valuable suggestion. We must apologise for the fact that the music list did not appear in the January number of the *Review*. The omission is due in some way to holiday pressure.—ED.]

DEAR EDITOR,—May I call the attention of members to a course of lectures given by Mrs. Clement Parsons (who so often lectures for us), under the auspices of the University of London, on "The Psychology of Infancy and Childhood." The lectures will begin on Monday, Feb. 12th, at 3 p.m., at 13, Kensington Square, W. Syllabus and particulars as to fees can be obtained from Miss Faithful, at the above address.

Yours sincerely,

F. NOËL ARMFIELD.

DEAR EDITOR,—I wonder who selects the music to be played to the children each term, because I think it would be so much nicer if the list could be arranged a bit earlier. In my case Mr. T— wishes all the pieces to be played, so that when the list does not appear in the *Parents' Review* until so late it leaves me hardly any time in the holidays to get them up. Could the music for the autumn term be put in the July *Parents' Review*; that for the Easter term in the December, and for the Summer term in the April *Parents' Review*? I should be very glad if you would suggest this to Mrs. Glover, or whoever arranges the list.

H. M. S.

[The above suggestion has been made to Mrs. Glover who kindly consents.—Ed.]

P.N.E.U. NOTES.

Edited by Miss F. NOEL ARMFIELD, Sec., 26, Victoria Street, S.W.
Tel. 479 Victoria.

To whom all Hon. Local Secs. are requested to send reports of all matters of interest connected with their branches, also 6 copies of any prospectuses or other papers they may print.

N.B.—Kindly write on one side of paper only.

NEW BRANCHES.

The Executive Committee has been approached with a view to starting Branches in the following places:—

BRENTFORD.

CARDIFF.—Names may be sent to Mrs. Hamilton, Blackladies, Dynas Powis.

DUNFERMLINE.—Mrs. Beveridge, Pitreavie, Dunfermline, would be glad to hear from people interested.

EALING.

MANCHESTER.

SWANSEA.

Readers of the *Parents' Review* living in these districts, or having friends there, are asked to communicate with Miss Armfield, 26, Victoria Street, S.W.

BRISTOL.—On Thursday, Dec. 7th, at University College, Lady Dodsworth presiding, Mr. F. Richardson Cross lectured on "Eyesight and its Abuse." The lecturer prefaced his lecture by describing the eye, its functions and working, and illustrated his remarks by diagrams. He pointed out that sight lies in the brain, and therefore in order that the eye should be at its best it was essential that the brain should be at its best. The brain function was affected by defective sight. He alluded to the hereditary tendency to defective sight, and mentioned that one of the most common causes of blindness was inflammation in the child's eyes at birth. This was absolutely preventible by cleanliness, and he warned parents against the danger of washing a baby's eyes with the same water as that used for its body. It is hoped that Mr. Cross may allow this lecture to be published in full and therefore a fuller report will not be given.

EDINBURGH.—The first meeting of the season was held, by kind invitation of Mrs. Bartholomew, at Falcon Hall, Morningside. Professor Earl Barnes, U.S.A., who had come down from London for the purpose, addressed a large and appreciative audience on "What children think of the subjects they study." Professor Darroch, Edinburgh University, presided. The lecturer claimed that there were three questions to be considered in teaching any

particular study to children; its information value, its training value, and its possibility. It was the last aspect of which we had made a special study. He said that there were two schools of thought, those who believed that children should study on the lines that interested them, and those who felt that they should work at what was most difficult, obstacles met and mastered being stepping stones necessary to the training of character. Professor Barnes, himself, felt that both character and knowledge could be attained by giving children subjects which interested them, as there was no study, however attractive, but presented difficulties to the student, and the pace could always be accelerated if greater effort was found to be desirable. At the same time he disapproved of teaching children any subject too advanced for their understanding, as to anticipate appetite did little to accelerate growth. Whatever views might be entertained the lecturer felt that it was of importance to know what children really liked or disliked. He had made an exhaustive study of the subject, and gave an interesting number of statistics showing what lessons were most appreciated or liked, and which most disliked. His statistics had been collected from three different centres in Pennsylvania, which he was satisfied were representative enough to give an accurate idea of the feeling of the children all through the United States. The questions put to each child had been simply "What study do you like most?" "What study do you dislike worst?" The two subjects which stood out pre-eminently in the answers were reading and numbers (arithmetic), with both boys and girls the percentage followed much the same lines. The largest number gave reading as their favourite subject up to the age of about eleven, this percentage dwindling away until at the age of fifteen hardly any children referred to the subject. Arithmetic, on the contrary, disliked generally during the early years became more and more popular until at fifteen it was given the largest number of votes. Passing from facts to the interpretation the lecturer said, that in learning to read, two aspects were to be considered, the purely mechanical effort, and the adjustment of soul and intellect to the matter contained. The statistics seemed to show that having mastered the mechanical with interest, the children had not been able to pass on to the other thought. This was a subject for grave consideration among educationists. He, himself, felt that something should be done to raise the subject-matter to a higher level by interest. The discussion at the close was very animated, and many questions were asked. Among the speakers were Prof. Geddes, Rev. John Kelman, Dr. Tarolia, Miss Ainslie, Mr. George Smith, Merchiston, Dr. Leslie Merchiston, Dr. Tchlapp, Mr. Young (Canongate School), and others.—By kind invitation of Mrs. Barbour, a meeting was held at 4, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, on Friday, Dec. 15th, when Miss Melville, warden University Hall, St. Andrew's University, gave an address on "The Place of the University in the Education of Girls." Miss Ainslie, headmistress George Watson's Ladies' College, president. Miss Melville dealt with two aspects of the subject, the place the Scottish University now holds among women, and the place it should hold. She said that although the number of matriculations had increased largely during the past years, this was not altogether as satisfactory as would at first sight appear, as the increase was largely due to commercial impulse. Universal culture was not sufficiently considered among the students, the result being that only those subjects were taken up which had a direct market value, in short, that 75 per cent. of the students entered the University only to enable them to take up teaching, this, under present conditions, was perhaps inevitable, but the speaker felt that a more normal condition might result, if girls showing

intellectual bent were encouraged to join the University classes. Miss Ainslie agreed with Miss Melville on the desirability of a college education for girls, as it afforded them a systematic training. She had, she said, the greatest respect for the self-taught, but that she had invariably found that they were rarely able to select the best course of study. She spoke in defence of English Universities, and said she felt strongly the need in Scotland of cultured women, able to influence the girls who came to the Universities. This might, perhaps, someday be remedied, but in the meantime, the English Universities had the advantage in this respect. The meeting was well attended, and a number of questions were asked at the close.

GLASGOW.—The second lecture of the season was delivered on Wednesday, Dec. 6th, at 19, Park Circus (by kind permission of Mrs. Cuthbert Steward), when Miss Grace Paterson delivered an interesting address on "Domestic Science in Public Schools." Pointing out that the true object of education is to give such instruction to the scholars as will raise the character of their homes, she insisted on the need for women getting the necessary training, as makers of the home. She lamented that cookery and laundry work are not compulsory, as sewing is, in Board schools. As far back as 1857, Dr. Lancaster brought the subject of "Foodstuffs" under the notice of the Science and Art Department, but it was not till fifteen years later that Buckmaster lectured, and schools of cookery were set up. In 1882, cookery was recognised as a subject, and in 1884, a grant for attendance began to be given. The Education Department issues strict directions as to fireplaces, dishes, etc. The scholars are taught to market, if possible. Note books of special points, recipes, etc., are kept. Habits of neatness and method are inculcated. Kitchens are equipped at the schools or at convenient centres. There are 2834 schools in Scotland with such classes in connection with them. Rural schools are more difficult to supply. Here the County Council often arranges for ten or twelve lectures taught by a peripatetic teacher. Referring to mixed schools, the lecturer considered that co-education hindered girls from getting due instruction in special subjects. She spoke of household management as a mental discipline as well as a practical advantage. Habits of accuracy and method are inculcated, "What to do" and "How to do it" are both impressed on the scholar. In secondary schools girls' special subjects are entirely banished and the time table filled up with learning certificate subjects. She holds that Domestic Science should be at least optional. Evening classes, however, can be had very cheap, and are largely taken advantage of. Last year 3854 women in Glasgow availed themselves of classes in millinery, cooking, dressmaking, and domestic hygiene, while instruction on the feeding of infants and laws of health was given to young mothers. In conclusion, while regretting that cookery and laundry work are not compulsory subjects and that the time devoted to them in the supplementary course is so short, we must admit a gradual improvement in home conditions.

HARROW.—On Oct. 27th, at St. Margaret's (by kind permission of Miss Neumann), a *Conversazione* was held, at which Mrs. Clement Parsons gave an address on "The Aims of the P.N.E.U." Dr. Chattaway occupying the chair. The meeting resulted in a considerable accession of members. On Nov. 18th, at the house of Dr. and Mrs. Chattaway, an interesting and instructive lecture was given by Mr. Meiklejohn on "Africa," and on Nov. 30th, at Northwood, Dr. Helen Webb gave a most helpful and suggestive lecture on "Habit." Both these meetings were well attended and much appreciated, and the Branch is growing rapidly.

HYDE PARK AND BAYSWATER.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. E. L. Franklin, 50, Porchester Terrace, Hyde Park. "At Home" Thursday mornings, or by appointment. The following arrangements have been made:—Tuesday, Feb. 13th, Mrs. Rayner Batten will read chapters from the "Home Education Series," at 3 p.m., at 28, Craven Hill Gardens, W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Blagden). Tea and Coffee, 4 p.m.—Monday, Feb. 19th, W. O. Brigstocke, Esq., Hon. Sec. of the Modern Language Association, and Oral Examiner at the University of London, will lecture on "Modern Language Teaching," at 5 p.m., at 69, Queensboro' Terrace, W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Langridge). Miss Latham, Principal of St. Mary's College, Paddington, in the chair. Tea and Coffee, 4.30 p.m.—Monday, March 12th, T. R. Ablett, Esq., will lecture on "Observation Drawing illustrated by the Art of Childhood," at 5 p.m., at 13, Mansfield Street, W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Bridgeman). Mr. W. Bridgeman in the chair. Tea and Coffee, 4.30 p.m.—Thursday, March 29th, Mrs. Langridge will read from the "Home Education Series," at 3 p.m., at The Lodge, Ladbroke Road, W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Stirling). Tea and Coffee, 4 p.m.

READING.—The biographer of Ruskin and the new Master of the Fine Art Department, University College, Reading (Mr. W. G. Collingwood, M.A.), recently read a most interesting paper on "Nursery Artists," which was illustrated by an unique collection of drawings by young children. Mr. W. G. Collingwood, in the course of his paper, said they were all there as students of child-life to exchange impressions. Most people certainly could learn drawing. Up to a certain point the power might be to nearly all what the power of writing was, another common faculty, a sort of habitual expression of innumerable things and thoughts which were now to many on the further side of a locked door. And by that increase of amateur art professional art would not suffer, but gain, while the nation would be spiritually the richer. Mr. F. H. Wright proposed, and Dr. Gilford seconded, a vote of thanks to the chairman, speaker, and host and hostess, and after a discussion, Mr. Collingwood, in reply, suggested that the branch should take up that new field of research which he had indicated, and collect complete series of their children's sketches, which they might compare the one with the other at an annual gathering.

RICHMOND.—The Rev. Theodore Wood gave one of his delightful and instructive lectures on "Nature and Her Servants" to the members of the Parents' National Educational Union, and a goodly number of young people and children, at the Presbyterian Hall. He showed how the bodies of monkeys were adapted to the kind of life they led, and the feet of the biped human became another pair of hands to the quadrumanus. Again, the cat and the lion were provided with the noiseless, padded foot and the powerfully expanding iris for night work, and the terrible claws to hold and tear their prey. The bat, too, was a creature of the night, whose arms and feet became wings, and its thumbs hooks to hang themselves up by in such a position as to enable them to start off at the first approach of danger. The mole and the seal were dealt with, and the mighty whale with his blow holes, the horse with his beautiful hoofs—adapted, said the lecturer, for the hardest stony ways, without any necessity for shoes. And lastly came the camel, with his great spreading hoofs, to enable him to walk on the sand, into which the horse's hard, small feet would quickly sink. Thus every creature was fitted for the life it has to lead, and its members modified or developed to suit its peculiar circumstances. As usual, in Mr. Wood's lectures, the blackboard illustrations were most illuminating.

SURBITON.—A Christmas holiday lecture for children on natural history was given at the Assembly Rooms, on Jan. 11th, by Miss Beatrice Taylor. About 120 were present. The subject was "Dwellers on Sandy Shores," and the lecture was illustrated with lantern slides. Miss Taylor spoke with evident understanding of the tastes of her audience, and the many children present were attentive and interested throughout. Pictures of sea-anemones, sea-urchins, barnacles, cockles, mussels, oysters, lobsters, etc., were recognised as old friends by those who had been at the sea-side, and who were pleased to show their knowledge in answer to Miss Taylor's questions. Details of the growth and habits of many sea-creatures were given, and practical hints as to ways of keeping them in captivity for a short time without cruelty. At the end of the lecture many children crowded round the table of specimens, and were delighted to take home with them the shells, pieces of sea-weed or moss which Miss Taylor gave them.

WINCHESTER.—At a meeting in the College Memorial Buildings, on Dec. 3rd, Mr. J. A. Fort, Winchester College, read an interesting and suggestive paper on "Heredity and Environment." He traced briefly the growth of ideas on the subject, from Lamarque and Weismann, pointing out that, although the conclusion is not undisputed, the majority of scientists are of Weismann's opinion, that acquired characteristics are not transmitted to the off-spring, and that natural selection alone, working through accidental variation is the cause of the evolution of the species. This would seem a pessimistical doctrine, when applied to the perfectibility of the human race. If none of our acquired qualities can be transmitted, every child must start where his father started, and go through the process of mental, moral, and physical training from the beginning. No efforts on the part of the present generation to improve physique or mental power, will benefit a succeeding one. But Weismann and his followers, look deeper and see that although the actual qualities are not transmitted, yet a tendency to acquire like qualities is undoubtedly hereditary. Environment, though not so important a factor as these hereditary tendencies, has without doubt a marked influence on a child's character, but there is a third something, more important than either of the foregoing, which is certainly not intended nor the product of environment, namely personality. We may say, therefore, that a child, as we have it to train and educate, is made up of three parts: hereditary tendencies, environment and individuality or personality. Education cannot alter either the environments or the hereditary capacity of an individual; all that it can do, is to develop the faculties for which a child has a hereditary capacity (intellectual training), and his personality or will-power (moral training). It is impossible to say in any case what amount of development through training may be possible, only there are certain characteristics common to all children, and these will indicate to us the general lines on which all education must work. Anger, love of pleasure, dislike of work, love of movement, dislike of sedentary pursuits, these are preserved in the child for the safety and welfare of the race, but if left unrestrained in him, he will revert to the savage, the function of education, as of civilisation, is the teaching of self-control, the training of the will.—On Saturday, Jan. 13th, Miss Taylor gave a most interesting lecture on "The Movement of Plants," illustrating her subject with lantern slides. After the lecture, Miss Taylor shewed the children several specimens under the microscope, and also shewed them how to mount their own slides, in which they were much interested.

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THE INFLUENCE OF HEREDITY & ENVIRONMENT UPON THE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL.*

By J. A. FORT.

My subject was given to me by a member of the committee, and in a rash moment I undertook to write about it. I need not say that I have found my task only more and more difficult as I thought more and more about it, and that I only carry out my promise to read a paper—firstly, because almost any paper will serve as the basis for a discussion, and, secondly, because I think those who are here really want rather to consider how evolutionist doctrines should affect their treatment of their children and their scheme of education, than to hear a theoretical enquiry into the scientific bases of those doctrines.

I must, however, first say a word upon one theoretical question involved in the doctrine of heredity. There are two possible views as to the nature of heredity: the one that parents can transmit only those qualities which they themselves inherited, the other that they can transmit also the characteristics which they have acquired by the use of their faculties and powers. According to the former view, Sandow's son, if he has one, will be likely to inherit from him only the physique with which Sandow began life; according to the second, he will be likely to inherit not only that, but all¹ or

* Paper read to the Winchester branch of the P.N.E.U.